

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4660

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

UNCLAS BEIRUT 7130

USIA FOR IOP/M, IPS, IBS, INA

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TAGS: SOPN, PFOR, XF, EG, LE

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - OPENING OF SUEZ CANAL

1. SUMMARY. REOPENING OF SUEZ CANAL RECEIVED WITH MIXED FEELINGS IN TODAY'S BEIRUT PRESS. LEADING INDEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR" HOPES THAT REOPENED CANAL WILL BECOME ANOTHER INSTRUMENT OF PRESSURE FOR PEACE. PRO-SOVIET PRO-EGYPTIAN "ASH-SHA'B" IS CONVINCED REOPENED CANAL WILL BENEFIT EGYPT AND WHOLE WORLD. PRO-IRAQI "BEIRUT" IS WILLING TO ACCEPT REOPENING OF CANAL AS LONG AS ISRAEL IS NOT PERMITTED TO USE IT. PRO-LIBYAN "AL-KIFAH AL-'ARABI" SEES REOPENING AS ANOTHER EGYPTIAN RETREAT BEFORE U.S. AND ISRAEL. END SUMMARY.

2. FUAD MATAR, EGYPTIAN AFFAIRS EXPERT OF LEADING INDEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR", WRITES: "IN OPENING CANAL TO MARITIME TRAFFIC TODAY, PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT IS GIVING IT NEW DIMENSION,

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THAT OF AN 'INTERNATIONAL ISSUE' WHICH CONCERNS FRENCH,

JAPANESE, RUSSIANS, AMERICANS, AND OTHERS AS MUCH AS IT DOES EGYPTIANS AND ARABS. THIS BEING SO, WHOLE WORLD SHOULD FORM ONE FRONT IN ORDER TO KEEP CANAL OPEN BY REMOVING HIDDEN DANGERS ARISING FROM FACT THAT ISRAEL REFUSES TO COMPLY WITH INTERNATIONAL RESOLUTIONS. IN FEW MONTHS, OPEN CANAL CAN BECOME AN INSTRUMENT OF PRESSURE LIKE OIL.... PROCESSION OF PRESIDENT SADAT, WHO WILL SAIL CANAL TODAY TO ANNOUNCE RESUMPTION OF ITS ACTIVITY, IS PROCESSION OF MURKY JOURNEY TOWARDS PEACE BECAUSE ISRAEL CONTINUES TO OCCUPY ARAB LAND. IF CANAL OPEN TO INTERNATIONAL MARITIME TRAFFIC CAN BE TURNED INTO PRESSURE CARD, THEN JOURNEY TOWARDS PEACE CAN BE SHORTENED AND CLARIFIED."

3. COLUMNIST MUHAMMAD NAQQASH OF PRO-SOVIET PRO-EGYPTIAN "ASH-SHA'B" WRITES: "TODAY CANAL RETURNS TO LIFE AGAIN. ACTIVITY AND FORTUNE RETURN TO IT, BENEFITTING EGYPT AND WHOLE WORLD.... IT RETURNS TO LIFE THANKS TO BRAVERY OF ITS EGYPTIAN AND ARAB OWNERS.... ARMS OF FRIENDS -- THE SOVIETS-- HELPED THEM BY COMPLEMENTING THEIR DETERMINATION, SKILL, AND BRAVERY.... ON THIS BRIGHT ARAB DAY... ARABS FEEL SELF-CONFIDENTLY THAT FULL AND JUST PEACE IS DEFINITELY RETURNING TO THEIR LANDS."

4. SULAYMAN EL-FIRIZLI, CHIEF EDITOR OF PRO-IRAQI "BEIRUT", WRITES: "PRESIDENT SADAT REJECTS THE VERY PRINCIPLE OF THEORY THAT CLOSURE OF SUEZ CANAL WAS ONE OF REQUIREMENTS OF STEADFASTNESS. INSTEAD, HE SAYS THAT OPENING IT IS ONE OF THESE REQUIREMENTS. IN HIS OPINION, OUTSIDE WORLD HAD GOTTEN USED TO CLOSED CANAL, AND OPENING IT WILL CAUSE WORLD INTERESTS TO ADAPT TO NEW CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CREATE NEW CALCULATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.... IN OTHER WORDS, HE WANTS TO SHOW THAT HE IS ACTING POSITIVELY. HE DESCRIBES FORMER "NEGATIVE" POLICIES, AMONG THEM CLOSURE OF CANAL, AS HAVING PUNISHED WORLD TO BENEFIT OF ISRAEL.... IN ANY EVENT, CRITICIZING OPENING OF CANAL IS A BIASED AND FAULTY POSITION. REAL TEST WILL BE WHETHER OR NOT ISRAEL IS PERMITTED TO USE CANAL IN ANY WAY."

5. PRO-LIBYAN "AL-KIFAH AL-'ARABI" WRITES: "WE ARE CERTAIN THAT OPENING OF CANAL IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES UNCLASSIFIED

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WAS MEASURE PARALLEL TO PLANT OF RETREAT AND WITHDRAWAL THAT EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES ADOPTED RECENTLY BEFORE PREVARICATING AMERICAN NEGOTIATORS AND BEFORE INTRANSIGENT ISRAELI ENEMY. IT APPEARS RULERS IN CAIRO WANTED, WITH THIS BLATANT HARBINGER OF PEACE, TO PROVE THAT THEY HAVE DEFINITIVELY ABANDONED IDEA OF WAR. PERHAPS THEY WILL NOT STOP AT THIS LEVEL OF CONTINUOUS CONCESSIONS, FOR THEY HAVE BEGUN TO FLOAT IDEAS RE PASSAGE OF ISRAELI GOODS

THROUGH CANAL...IN EXCHANGE FOR 'TACTICS' AND PROPOSALS
RE LIMITED PARTIAL WITHDRAWALS.... SADAT'S SHIP, WHICH
WILL TRAVERSE SUEZ CANAL TODAY, IS A VESSEL SAILING IN A
FOG OF STERILE KISSINGERIAN SOLUTIONS. IT WILL CONTINUE
TO WANDER UNTIL IT IS GUIDED TO PATH OF SALVATION, THAT
OF ARAB UNITY, STRUGGLE, AND LIBERATION."

GODLEY

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